and sparsely clothed with first plumage, which above and across the breast is uniform grayish-brown, on the abdomen yellowish-white. There are two light (brownish-white) bars on the wing-coverts.

If I am not mistaken, the nests and eggs just described are the first identified ones that have been thus far reported, but Captain Bendire writes me that he has what he believes to be "a set of these eggs taken at the Big Meadows on the banks of the Des Chutes River near its headwaters, on my way from Fort Walla Walla, W. T., to Fort Klamath, Oregon' June 12, 1882. The nest was placed in the crotch of a willow overhanging the water, and the parent shot, but falling into the river was carried away. The eggs have a faint grayish-green ground color; two of them are heavily spotted and blotched with lilac and dark umber brown. They are about the size of the eggs of *D. æstiva*, and resemble the eggs of *D. blackburniæ*, with the exception of the ground color, the green of which is not as perceptible as in the eggs of *blackburniæ*."—WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

What constitutes a Full Set of Eggs?— The question as to what constitutes a full set of eggs, and how to determine the number with any certainty, is a matter to which I desire to call attention, and, in doing so, will say that I have given the matter considerable thought, and have reached the conclusion, on account of the many nest robbers of the birds, that the larger number is the only safe one to enter as a full set. For example, say thirty nests of *first* sets of a species are found, with birds sitting, as follows: Four nests with four eggs in each; six nests with three eggs in each; ten nests with two eggs in each; and ten nests with one egg in each. In this case I would enter three and four—possibly two to four—as a full set. But in no case one to four, believing the undisturbed birds of a species do not vary much, if any, as to number of eggs laid. Say four eggs in first set, and three in the second; that is, in case the first set is destroyed, or the birds rear two or more broods in a season; for I find as a rule that the first set is the larger one.

Many of the birds, especially the larger ones that breed in trees, as Hawks, Herons, etc., cannot hide their bulky nests; in fact, the branches overhead are more a protection to the thieves than to the nests when the parent birds are away; for all birds, however watchful, will, during the early stages of laying and love making, steal away from their nests a short time, for a sail or flirtation, which affords the cunning Crows, Jays, squirrels, etc., an opportunity to come up from the lower limbs and steal the eggs unobserved, or before the parent birds can return to protect them. Such robberies, and the advancement of incubation, make the birds more watchful and closer sitters. But, with all their vigilance, I think to find a full set the exception and not the rule. It is to the interest of paid collectors and dealers in eggs to have the smaller as well as the larger number treated as full sets. But the oölogist at heart, whether a collector or not, can have but one desire, and that is to arrive at the facts in the case.

In my 'Revised Catalogue of the Birds of Kansas,' I was governed in

giving the dimensions and coloration of the eggs by the sets examined, but I did not venture to change the number when given by other writers, lest such changes, based on my limited observation, might prove erroneous or misleading; but the more I look the matter over, its importance to my mind increases. I therefore call attention to it, hoping to draw out, through 'The Auk' and other sources, the views of others.—N. S. Goss, *Topeka, Kans.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

[*Correspondents are requested to write briefly and to the point. No attention will be paid to anonymous communications.*]

The Camera and Field Ornithology.

To the Editors of the Auk:—

Dear Sirs:—A year ago last autumn I purchased me a first class photograpic camera with all the chemicals and appliances complete. In doing this I had three or four objects in view, in which it struck me that this instrument could be of very considerable assistance. In the first place, I was led to believe that it would prove a valuable auxiliary in my anatomical work, such as the photographing of certain dissections, osteological subjects, and the reduction in size of large skeletons that I intended to have lithographed to illustrate my memoirs. Secondly, I found myself in an Indian country that was rapidly undergoing those changes which an advancing civilization is sure to bring with it, and it was my aim to preserve, in the way of good photographs, much that pertained to their life, habits, and mode of living in the past, etc. Lastly, however, I felt that I had a very pretty field open before me that would, if worked with patience, yield another valuable series of figures for illustrative work, and this was the photographing in their native haunts many of the wild animals of the country. During the past ten years I have seen the time when I have been near enough to have obtained good photographs, either in the mountains or on the boundless plains, of such animals as our antelope, buffalo, mountain sheep, and a great many of the smaller mammals and birds. In this letter, however, it is my object merely to say a few words in regard to the advantages to be derived from the use of the camera in field ornithology. In the first place, if we can secure good photographic negatives of such subjects, the rapidly-improving processes permit us to transfer them with absolute accuracy to either metal or stone, and if I am not mistaken, to wood, also. Moreover, these processes are becoming cheaper and better every year that goes by, so that it falls within the means of nearly every scientific publishing medium to reproduce such drawings